

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DUBLIN 00617 071637Z

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E. O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJ: SINN FEIN/IRA DEVELOPMENTS

1. NEWSPAPERS BELIEVE THEY HAVE RECEIVED WORD FROM PROVISIONAL IRA THAT NI CEASE-FIRE WILL BE MAINTAINED AT LEAST FOR A WHILE LONGER. AS USUAL IN RECENT WEEKS, THERE IS SUBSTANTIAL CONFUSION OVER PROVO PLANS, PROBABLY BECAUSE HAWKS AND DOVES WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION ARE PUTTING OUT CONFLICTING STORIES. ONE PAPER REPORTED PLANS TO HOLD A MEETING OF IRA "ARMY COUNCIL," BUT IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER MEETING HAS BEEN ACTUALLY HELD OR WHETHER DECISION TO MAINTAIN CEASE-FIRE WAS REACHED IN SOME OTHER FASHION. PROVO SINN FEIN PRESIDENT RUAIRI O BRADAIGH, SPEAKING IN NI, HAS URGED BOYCOTT OF MAY 1 CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION ELECTIONS. PROVOS HAD EARLIER ANNOUNCED THAT THEY WOULD NOT CONTEST ELECTIONS, BUT THIS WAS FIRST CALL FOR ACTIVE BOYCOTT. THE BOYCOTT STRATEGY APPEARS TO IMPLY THAT CEASE-FIRE WILL BE MAINTAINED UNTIL ELECTION TIME THOUGH PERHAPS NOT MUCH LONGER. PROVOS WILL THEN UNDOUBTEDLY ATTEMPT TO CLAIM ALL NON-VOTERS AS THEIR OWN SUPPORTERS. THE CLAIM WILL NOT BE CONVINCING, BUT IT MAY ALLOW PROVOS TO SAVE FACE. NO ONE HERE BELIEVES THAT PROVOS WOULD WIN ANY SIGNIFICANT PERCENTAGE OF THE VOTE IF THEY ACTUALLY CONTESTED THE ELECTIONS. IN HIS SPEECH ON BOYCOTT, O BRADAIGH APPEARED AWARE OF PROVO WEAKNESS IN POPULAR APPEAL,

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PAGE 02 DUBLIN 00617 071637Z

BECAUSE HE ANNOUNCED THAT EMPHASIS IN COMING MONTHS MUST BE ON INCREASING LINKS WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES BY SUCH MEANS AS

"ADVICE CENTERS." (COMMENT: WE DOUBT THAT ANYTHING PROVOS COULD DO WILL WIN MUCH SUPPORT BUT THE EFFORT MAY AT LEAST DISTRACT SOME OF THEM FROM GUNS AND BOMBS.

2. PROVOS' APPARENT DECISION TO MAINTAIN CEASE-FIRE HAS BEEN WEL-COMED AS A STEP TOWARD PEACE. ALTHOUGH NI HAD A BLOODY WEEKEND APRIL 5 AND 6, ANY FULL-SCALE RESUMPTION OF PROVO CAMPAIGN WOULD BE EXPECTED TO MAKE THE SITUATION SUBSTANTIALLY WORSE THAN IT IS.

3. THE NEW IRISH REPUBLICAN SOCIALIST PARTY (IRSP) HAS ALSO ANNOUNCED DECISION NOT TO CONTEST NI ELECTION. PARTY HAD AT LEAST ONE SURE WINNER IN THE PERSON OF BERNADETTE DEVLIN MCALISKEY, WHO MAY BE DISAPPOINTED BY THE DECISION. ON BALANCE, MOST COMMENTATORS HERE WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO SEE ALL THE SPLINTERS OF THE "REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT" INVOLVED IN NI ELECTIONS, HOPING THAT THIS WOULD PROVIDE ANOTHER INCENTIVE FOR PEACE.

4. OFFICIAL SINN FEIN APPARENTLY STILL PLANS TO CONTEST NI ELECTIONS, BUT ITS PROSPECTS MUST HAVE BEEN SERIOUSLY DAMAGED BY ITS VIOLENT FEUD WITH THE NEW IRSP. LABOR LEADER MICHAEL MULLEN IS TRYING TO MEDIATE BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS OF EXTREMISTS, BUT HE HAS NOT YET SUCCEEDED IN BRINGING A HALT TO THE SHOOTING. MOORE

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